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ABSTRACT

Teacher knowledge and development from the teacher perspective were studied. Teachers wrote their own stories using collaborative autobiography (writing individual stories in groups). This report documents the evolution of the research methodology in discerning the personal, individual, similar, common, and collective as researchers moved from gathering single cases to collections of cases of teachers' stories. Research focused on how to discern and represent what was common or collective without excluding the personal. Stories portrayed details of thinking and acting that teachers brought to the classroom. Researchers read the stories, identified themes, patterns, and essential structures, and noted what events, and vignettes best illustrated story elements. They recorded key words and phrases and represented collaborative interpretation using the teachers' own words and styles. Case studies and a capsule account (interpretive summary of the case study) are offered as well as a comparative analysis of clusters of stories that lets researchers identify types of commonalities relating to teachers' lives within their different experiences. The paper offers an aggregation of cases as a method for exploring commonality. It discusses how researchers can discern qualitative commonality through quantitative encoding and analysis and examines the role of the personal and contextual within qualitative validity and commonality. (SM)

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# On Being Personal About the Collective

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A note on authorship

This paper is written in parts in the voice of the first author since it relates events from up to ten years ago. Rochelle Yamagishi and Peter Chow are co-authors in that they were involved with me as co-researchers in encoding and in interpreting data from many teachers' stories during the last two years. R.L.B.

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## Introduction

For approximately ten years I (Butt) have been engaged with a number of colleagues in inquiring into the nature of teachers' knowledge and teacher development. We felt it is necessary to understand teachers' knowledge and teacher development as teachers themselves experience and construe it in order to shed light on the lived reality of their worklives, teaching, and their personal, professional development. We hoped this new type of knowledge would inform approaches to innovation, staff development, and school improvement.

Our primary methodology, then, was necessarily autobiographical in nature, whereby the teachers wrote their own stories through a process we developed called collaborative autobiography (Butt, 1989; Butt & Raymond, 1989). Within this process, which involves groups of teachers writing their individual stories, I have shared and written my story with them. We are all, therefore, co-researchers. Autobiography enables teachers to portray their own knowledge and development in their own voice. We felt that biography, with the role that the biographer would have in interpreting and constructing the "record" of a person's life into a story, might impose too many researcher biases into the narrative. This, we felt, would be especially worrisome if the researcher had not lived in the teacher's working context.

To date, we and our teacher co-researchers, have collected over one hundred teachers' stories. We see individual case studies, small comparative studies of several cases, specific, and general groups of stories as providing important insights into teachers knowledge, teacher development, and how one might facilitate teacher development. This paper will attempt to document the evolution of our methods in discerning the personal and individual, the similar, common or collective as we moved from single case studies to collections of cases of teachers' stories. One particularly intriguing question was how could we discern and represent what was common or collective without excluding the personal? As one moves, of course, from the individual case to larger collections the issue of difficulty changes from discerning and representing the common to that of the personal. In a sense, then, we wanted to create a unity--a synergy--of opposites.

### The Method of This Paper

When we started this work in the early eighties there was little methodological and metatheoretical discussion pertinent to the issue of the personal and collective available to guide our work in the way we thought we wanted to do it--particularly for biography and especially for autobiography. There were some frameworks within history (prosopography )

and sociology related to collective biography (Butt & Raymond, 1989, pp. 413-416) which we took note of in our work.

With little to guide us we proceeded slowly to figure out our own way to address this challenge throughout the last ten years. In preparation for this paper I did consult the literature and found, to my delight, that we now have some insights related to the issue of the personal and collective. I was tempted, then, to write a digested ex post facto reconstruction of this methodological metatheory, particularly as it pertained to "validity" and "generalizability" as the introduction to this piece--that is write the paper in a deductive manner. But I didn't. That is not the way it happened and I don't think readers will understand the paper best that way with abstraction up front and reality behind. I have written the paper, true to our method, as a story, examining, in turn, what we did with the individual case, comparison of several cases, examination and interrelation of clusters of stories, and the identification and clarification of themes which ran across a large number of stories and lastly, an interpretive integration of sixty teachers' stories. Following this I use my recent understanding of the literature to try to argue further as to how and why we need to include the personal, contextual and thick description in order to illustrate commonality, respect contextual complexity and demonstrate validity and generalization within and across teachers' stories.

## Our Story About The Personal And The Collective In Teachers' Stories

### From One Story to One Case

The length of our teachers' stories ranges from forty to over one hundred pages. These stories, in and of themselves, portray in day to day detail the ways of thinking and acting that teachers bring to their teaching. They also provide stories from their personal and professional development which help the reader to understand how they came to be that way. We have to face the unfortunate fact that these stories are too long for most forms of research communication except for book-like manuscripts. For the purposes of understanding the architecture of self (Pinar, 1988), within each story, therefore, it is necessary to provide an interpretive account of some ten to twenty pages which captures the essence of a teacher's knowledge and development. This interpretive account is created through a collaborative process among the autobiographer and several researchers. We read and reread the story without paying much attention to interpretation until we can internalize its main features and vignettes. Independently, we, then, identify its main themes and patterns using a protocol developed by Raymond (see Yamagishi, 1991). We attempt to identify whatever essential structures are contained within the story-- whether images, metaphors, principles, and the like. We also note what events, vignettes, and the parts of the story might best illustrate these

story elements. Key words, phrases and their meanings within the text are recorded. We then represent our collaborative interpretation of the story using, as far as possible, the teacher's own words, phrases, and style. The autobiographer has a significant part in the construction and validation of this text. This account provides the reader with access to a deep understanding of the core elements of the teacher's narrative while maintaining an expression of the stories' rich personal grain and detail.

The first story we interpreted as part of evolving this process was Lloyd's. It is published elsewhere (Butt & Raymond, 1989) but it is essential to include it here for our immediate purposes.

> Lloyd is a 38 year-old teacher with twelve years of teaching experience. He currently teaches grade six pupils, most of whom are of average or below average ability. He has been teaching in his current school for the past eleven years. Four years ago he was made administrative assistant. Lloyd is a Japanese Canadian whose family was interned during the war and resettled in Southern Alberta. He is the third youngest in a family of ten children. He is married with three children.
>
> Social Development of Students
>
> The description opens with a vignette wherein a colleague of Lloyd's angrily requests to talk with him about the behaviour of his class.
>
> > *As she stormed away, my innocent-looking children stared at me with disbelief. "Boy, is she ever mad at you,' volunteered Sara sympathetically. 'At me?' I questioned. 'I'd say she was quite upset with you students,' I added.*
> >
> > *I guess it was lecture time again. My students' overall work habits, attitude, and general conduct had not been up to par since the Christmas break and a gentle reminder during the first week back must have been ineffective . . .*
> >
> > *When I dispense my responsibility lecture, I deal with key concepts such as self-respect, self-discipline, maturity, pride, teamwork, commitment and responsibility.*
>
> Lloyd prides himself in having one of the classes that is the most responsible, trustworthy and disciplined in the school. He also feèls part of the reason for this, besides his disciplinary skill, is that he has good rapport with his students due to his personality. He shows warmth through talking to them, not at them, through joking around, through physical contact, and feels his small stature lessens the physical distance between them. Having a well-disciplined class also brings pressure. At times he fears that his classroom has become a dumping ground for students with every conceivable weakness . . . academic, social, disciplinary, and emotional. The principal and parents request placements. He wonders whether he is a social worker or a teacher--whether to go into counselling full-time, therefore not having to plan lessons and teach curriculum! He worries about burn-out, especially when some classes don't catch on quickly and require repeated reminders like his current class.
>
> In making sense of how he came to think and act this way in terms of what he calls social development in the classroom, Lloyd posits several shaping influences.
>
> Family
>
> Lloyd sees his parents and family as having a major effect on his teaching. Throughout his life, his parents have repeatedly stressed the concepts of respect, responsibility, commitment, self-discipline, teamwork, trust, and right and wrong. They had the ability to ingrain these values without spanking or verbal abuse. They were good role models and used the identical lectures that Lloyd uses now with his own children and

his class. Lloyd sees himself using the same concepts in the classroom, and as a professional, insists on the same high level organization, efficiency, commitment and standards of work that his parents exemplified in their community work for himself and his students.

For Lloyd, when he was growing up, the focus at home and elsewhere was collective family life whether working hard as a team to 'pull and top' sugar beets to get out of old shacks and beet farms to a better life, or other 'doing' projects. The notion of family and teamwork also comes through from Lloyd's background due to being the third youngest of ten siblings. A rough early life required them to care for, stick up for and help each other. Rules and organization, including not speaking when others were, were a necessary part of such a large group of siblings!

> *This feeling of family has also filtered down into my classroom. I stress to all my students that everyone is important in the classroom and no one student is the most important. I make sure that everyone has equal opportunity over the course of a week to assist in the daily routines, such as passing out books, being messengers, getting the fluoride rinse, etc. I also like to stress the notion that each member of the class is responsible to the class as well as to himself.*
>
> *Developing a feeling of sticking together, helping and caring for each other--a feeling I had in my family--is also promoted in my classroom. I always stress in my lectures to my students on the subject of family, that they may not appreciate their parents/siblings right now, but sooner or later, they come to realize their value. Their family make up their true 'best friends' who are there when needed--blood is thicker than water.*

Cultural Deprivation

> *My parents, like all others of Japanese ancestry, were relocated and placed in internment camps during the Second World War. Allowed to take only as many personal possessions as they were able to carry, they lost virtually everything they had worked for in this 'Land of Opportunity', except their dignity. From living in nice, clean homes, they were corralled into prison-type camps and later shipped to farms in Southern Alberta where they lived in 'beet shacks' with few of life's amenities. Through all this, my parents were able to maintain their sense of objectivity to channel all their energies into gaining acceptance and the respectability they desired.*

Lloyd's family successfully worked and earned its way out of the beet farm shacks and into the city.

> *Our quest for respectability was not an easy one. At that time, there were very few Japanese Canadians willing to reside in Lethbridge for they were like 'bananas'--yellow on the outside and white on the inside--and were not able to hide from the glaring eyes and sharp tongues of some bigoted people. I am certain that my sensitivity towards students of visible minority groups--like Native Indians, Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese and Pakistanis--is a direct result of the many instances of discrimination I personally faced some 20 years ago.*

Lloyd's own experience of cultural deprivation enables him to relate to the children in his class, most of whom could be described in similar terms or, at least, socio-economically deprived. He can empathize with their lot and feels that 'with a joint effort we will have a smooth-running operation with a common goal-*to move upward*'.' The common goal obviously includes Lloyd himself. Becoming an administrative assistant was very important. Lloyd also is highly motivated to do a good job, to be the best teacher, a good administrator and also to be seen to be doing a good job so that he might become a principal of his own school.

Academic Development

I am a stickler for mandated curriculum for the following reasons:

1. I have made a habit from my earliest teaching days to refer to the curriculum guide and follow it like the Gospel.

2. I want to avoid criticism from my students' subsequent teachers.

3. I want my students to have an easy transition from grade to grade.

4. I want to have the black and white data to justify my programs to administrators, parents, students and other outside groups (safety measure).

5. I have made a commitment--however covert--to superiors that I would teach the curriculum guide and having a well-developed sense of right and wrong, I just do not want to eliminate any areas.

Earlier Lloyd had also written that he didn't want authority figures to come down on him for failing to cover the curricula, that nothing should be left out in a system of progression, and that he found it challenging to learn and cover all curriculum areas since it gave him a sense of knowledgeability.

> *However, I must admit that I do deviate from the curriculum guide, in that my practical knowledge influences how much time and detail I will use in covering certain areas. For example, I will spend much more time than recommended with numeration, operation and problem-solving concepts than the areas of measurement and geometry. In essence, I am making a decision for the students, saying that the former is much more important and useful than the latter.*

Lloyd had a plethora of language arts materials which he has used throughout the last five years. He had gradually grown away from using the teacher's guide so closely, tending to pick and choose on the basis of relevance and suitability.

> *The recommended math textbook lacks sufficient practice examples and also seems to make too many presuppositions as to previous experience and therefore creates a lack of sequence or a sense of progression....*
>
> *However, whenever I am teaching a subject for the first time, I follow a prescribed text, providing me with a vehicle to learn the subject matter. I may or may not leave the text, depending on its value and whether or not I am able to find and develop my own materials....*
>
> *As in most of my subjects, I use the text as only a guide and add a lot of supplementary activities of my own. Generally speaking, I place stock in my own materials more so than a prescribed text.*

Lloyd uses his own and other tests quite frequently, including pre-and post-tests since: growth can be measured from start to finish; problems areas can be diagnosed; any concept worth teaching is worth testing; children need to write tests so as to do well in external assessment; also Lloyd does not want his teaching to be labelled by unfavourable test scores.

Lloyd's description of his approach to various subjects illuminates his teaching style which is characterized by structure, organization, flexibility, sequential order and progression. Lloyd finds he prefers teaching in a block approach rather than a spiral method, with sequential order and progression starting from the basics then proceeding in increasing levels of difficulty to more complex concepts.

Influences of the Past

Lloyd locates his general attitude towards mandated curriculum in his parents' emphasis on right and wrong (you are required by law to teach the curriculum), commitment (complete the curriculum as prescribed), and survival (if you teach what you are supposed to you don't get into trouble), and in his striving to gain acceptance and respectability. The theme of upward mobility can be picked up again, here, from the previous section. The necessary striving for success as a number of a minority group combined with the strong work ethic of the Japanese culture contributed to what Lloyd calls his great obsession. This relates not only to his attitude to curriculum but the total teaching job, including thorough preparation and very detailed plans.

Lloyd arrived at his first full-time job with 'an inner drive and gusto to become the best damn teacher in the world!' He was obsessed with being the best using all his energy and time, even at the expense of his family and friends. Everything revolved around the realm of education. It became more than just a preoccupation.

> *Each day, for the first seven years of my teaching career was like a ritual. I would arrive at school an hour before the first bell and leave about an hour and one half at the close. This made it a solid 7.1/2 hours of productive and instructional time at school, not including noon hour extra-curricular supervision which occurred at different intervals during the year. After my evening meal at home, I would then settle down in my den and fly through yet another five or six hours of marking, creating worksheets and drawing up new and innovative lesson plans. I also studied the Alberta Program of Studies and the Alberta Curriculum Guide like a monk would study his Bible. I was ready.*

Even though he felt emotionally and physically drained at each day's end, the many instant rewards from the students plus requests from parents to have their children in his class, made it rewarding and provided motivation for Lloyd to pursue 'being the best.'

Lloyd's emphasis on language skills can be related to his experience as a child in school for whom English was a second language. Lloyd floundered for the first few years of schooling due to language difficulties and lack of a person to direct him at school. In fact he can hardly recall any teachings during that first few years. He went through a period where he was embarrassed when his parents came to school or when, with his parents, he accidentally encountered friends, and also, he didn't bring friends home, due to his parents' inability to speak English fluently. The teaching of language skills in his class is influenced by his parents' lack of English and Lloyd learning it as a second language; its importance is deeply ingrained.

Lloyd's beliefs and practices regarding the provision of a carefully and logically sequenced set of concepts with clear structure and organization, and the use of rote memory types of activity on occasion, relate to his own first four years of school, as well as to a particular teacher whom he calls his 'white mother.' These historical events, as well as his personal involvement in a project on Objective Based Education in Mathematics, contributed to evolving such beliefs that some content must have priority--the basics must be taught and mastered first, and skills must be presented according to difficulty level.

Understandably, with Lloyd's language problem, his first years of school were very difficult. He remembers having to struggle and agonize over simple concepts himself. But this changed significantly in the fifth grade with Mrs. Hunt.

> *My struggles as a student were nearly at an end after the fifth grade, thanks to a kind, young, energetic lady who brought everything all together for me and made me into a conscientious student. Mrs. Hunt taught in a very structured manner, was sensitive to our needs as students, and always had interesting lessons, however basic. She had many motivating techniques and was probably the single most important factor in my appreciation for handwriting, reading, neatness and order. To this day, I attempt to influence my students to do likewise.*

*Since I learned most of my skills, it seems, from Mrs. Hunt, I still can remember some of her strategies, many of which were of the rote memory type of activities. This has led me to believe that with students who are unable to conceptualize data (such as I was in those days), the use of a similar approach is effective. I try to use it with my modified students and it seems to be working.*

His own suffering--culturally and economically--has made him try to be a patient, understanding, and humanistic teacher. At the same time as being humanistic and remembering to teach basic knowledge through logical, sequential order, he illuminates this with life experiences through discussions, pictures, role playing and drama.

Interpretation: The Nature, Sources and Evolution of Lloyd's Knowledge

Lloyd's personal knowledge seems to be embodied by the notion of the basics for the three Ss--survival, safety and success. These three aims relate simultaneously to Lloyd himself, his personal and cultural history, his career progression, and to his socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. These are perceived by Lloyd as very strong mutual interests which he translates into a common goal--to move upward. Lloyd, in order to pursue this goal of upward mobility with his pupils, has a strong image of family in his personal knowledge. It embodies and generates a significant amount of the content and process of curriculum and pedagogy for his classroom.

The notions of safety, survival and success include acceptance. Positive feedback is necessary to indicate both acceptance and success. We can see how Lloyd feels quite secure and successful with his students from their feedback; they love him actually. When we move to a second potential source of acceptance and success--colleagues--we hear the story of Mrs. S and apathetic colleagues--negative feedback. Lloyd also feels a lot more comfortable sharing his ideas now that he is an administrator. By now, success as a teacher has given him the confidence that his ideas are worth sharing with his colleagues, combined with the fact that success in becoming an administrator gives him legitimizing authority.

Lloyd's personal and cultural background, and his striving for the three Ss, underpin his obsession with hard work, and constant pursuit of acceptance and competence for both himself and his pupils. Lloyd's craft knowledge integrates three main themes in order to provide for pupil acceptance, safety, survival and success. Firstly, social development derives directly from his personal background and family life. He examines this first; it is considered at least as important as, if not more important than, academic development which relates to the mandated curriculum. The values and ideas that Lloyd identifies as the fundamental content of his social development curriculum provide personal anchorage points of which Lloyd is certain. They relate to Lloyd's personal and cultural identity; they have also provided Lloyd, himself, with safety, survival and success. They bring Lloyd as a person into the classroom and provide for authenticity and continuity as they are applied to his pupils. The words used to describe his pedagogy in the social development aspect of his curriculum should also be noticed. He enforces, reinforces, trains, repeats, ingrains, stresses and emphasizes. A pedagogy that seems to be oriented towards long-term goals (personal growth objectives) would, therefore, be characterized by repetition, emphasis, training and reinforcement. Lloyd wonders if he is a teacher or a social worker. Yet, if he gave up this aspect of his practical knowledge, he would be giving up the part of himself that represents an appeal to the authentic part of his culture and his experience that gave survival, safety and success, and that binds him to his students' lives.

The second theme that is integrated into Lloyd's craft knowledge evolves out of academic development. This knowledge and practice evolves from family values, his experience as a learner, and through complying, for safety and survival reasons, to curriculum guidelines. He covers the curriculum, but interprets what *he* thinks are the basics, in a logical, well-planned, sequenced, structured and organized fashion. His sort of kids, from his experience, need to know this material to make sure they move up; they also learn it better if it is formulated in the above manner.

The third theme is what one might characterize as the transformational medium of Lloyd's practical knowledge. The first two themes involving 'ingrainment' of

acceptable social values and learning the basics through a structured and sequential approach, on their own, make Lloyd's pedagogy seem dry, boring and traditional. This, however, is not the case. The third theme can be called the human side of his personal knowledge, which appears to derive both from the image of family and Lloyd's background as well as being acceptable ways of teaching according to the modern theories of learning implicit in his curriculum guidelines, and the nature of children. Lloyd and his class, together as a team in an active way, provide the experience necessary for skill development. Through this approach there are opportunities for interaction and concrete experiences. He emphasizes establishing warm and friendly relationships with children as individuals and provides opportunities for expression of self and emotion through various means. Lloyd, through his past suffering, is able to identify and empathize in a very human way with his students. In the end, this human side is the predominant flavour of his pedagogy that they experience. They are part of a nurturing family which has the necessary structure and direction.

Lloyd's early life (persons, experiences, family) are the major sources of Lloyd's thoughts and actions. Later professional influences and experiences serve mainly to elaborate or refine his personal knowledge from the early years into his form of professional knowledge. His experience with socio-economically deprived children, and his upward mobility within teaching (Mrs. S--withdrawal, administrative experience) and the Objective Based Education project served to reinforce the interest in the basic fundamentals, structure, sequence and organization. Other sources of professional development have served more immediate instrumental, technical and acceptance needs.

Lloyd's knowledge was evolved in a professional sense very early in his career through his hard work at becoming a combination of what external sources and internal cultures and familial values might say 'the best possible teacher' would be. Following this early development of teaching competence, Lloyd claims he has changed very little. If he has changed he has done so in response to mandated policies, changes in roles, or through technical elaboration of existing skills such as determining, structuring and sequencing curriculum content, and designing effective tests through the Objective Based Education project. Experiences such as these allow Lloyd to become more explicitly what he already is. Following, then, the relatively rapid initial formation of his practical knowledge which combines the personal with the mandated through practical experience, Lloyd's professional development mainly involves incremental elaboration of original patterns.

In a sense this process attempts to identify and show what is <u>generative</u> across a teacher's story while maintaining the very personal grain and detail of the story in illustrating these elements.

We feel that this interpretive text or meta narrative represents a <u>case study of a teacher's story</u>. Whereas the case study, as compared to the story itself, might provide a optimum way of understanding those essences of the story, the next step in our treatment of qualitative data might represent a <u>diminution</u> in this form of understanding.

<u>The Capsule Argument</u>

When writing about teachers' stories, or when doing comparative analysis, once again, for most research communications, there is not enough space to include even our "shorter" interpretive accounts. We have found it necessary, therefore, to write <u>capsule</u> accounts of teachers' stories which are several pages long. These are used for summary, illustrative, and comparative purposes as well as eventually forming part of "aggregates" used to illustrate commonalities which run across teachers' stories. These accounts are largely the interpretive summaries of the case studies. We use the word capsule in order to suggest that we attempt to

include, as before, all of the important essences of the story with some important personal illustrations of those elements. Again, we try to use the key words and meanings of the storyteller in these accounts.

The capsule account, we feel, does represent a reduction of the personal. While it can contain the generative essence of the teacher's story without reduction it does reduce the personal grain and detail used to illustrate or embody these essences. In that sense it is an abstraction and thereby a limitation, although it doesn't exhibit the contextual loneliness of a scientific concept such as "gravitation," or traditional social science concepts such as "alienation." There is still some life text within the capsule account with which to situate understandings.

In order for the reader to get a sense of what these capsule accounts are like please refer to the interpretive summary at the end of Lloyd's story. As well a later section, which examines our use of cluster analysis of several stories, uses capsule accounts.

The Case Study of One and Commonality

Barbara Tuchman (1979) makes the case for one person's story as being the prism through which we can see and understand many others' lives. When we interpreted Lloyd's story we felt that within it would be things similar and in common in various ways with other teachers. As teachers ourselves we could see potential empathies and harmonies with our experiences as well as contrasts. Other readers would be able to do the same.

For us the sense of commonality that emerged from these thoughts were not monolithic or homogeneous but that some teachers would find some aspects which were similar perhaps similar enough to be called common. Other teachers would find other elements of the story which were harmonic. This brought to mind several images of the potential relationships and distinctions among teachers' stories. The words "ecological" and "web" came to mind (I was a scientist) and of clusters of teachers who, because of context and personal history, might see their stories as related. These distinct clusters might contrast with others. So I saw a complex web which might relate to one particular issue or similar issues. There could be many webs for many issues. If we overlap all of these webs, I wondered, would there be some commonalities which were related in some human, social, or professional way among many teachers' stories? One way in which we chose to investigate these questions was to conduct a comparative analysis of a cluster of teachers' stories. At this point we interpreted Glenda and Ray's stories and added their experiences to the mix.

Comparative Analysis of Clusters of Stories

Our concern for the integrity of individual teachers' stories and our respect for the illucidatory function of personal accounts of lived reality led us to interpret Glenda and Ray's stories using the same comprehensive interpretive process we used with Lloyd. Secondly, we

worked, in our initial comparative work, with full case studies, rather than with capsule accounts. Thirdly, in writing for several earlier publications we included the full case study accounts of at least two stories. The tyranny of space in other published articles forced us to use a combination of single case studies and one or more capsule accounts.

It was also vitally important to include a variety of ways in which what might be common is lived out with distinctly different persons and contexts to guard against monolithic, stereotypic, or homogeneous interpretations of a commonality. As well, we needed to "reduce," as far as possible, the dysfunction of reduction, abstraction, and the impersonal.

In order to illustrate the process of comparative analysis and the fruits of our endeavours we include, in addition to Lloyd's story, capsule accounts of Glenda and Ray's stories together with a comparative analysis.

> Glenda is a forty-four year old teacher with nine years of experience, two of which were in an International School in Pakistan. She comes from a white, lower-middle class background and was the eldest of four children in her family. She teaches in a multi-grade classroom in a school in a low socio-economic area, where English is the second language, attended by children from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. She works with immigrant and refugee children in a 'pull-out' resource room. She also assists fellow teachers meeting the needs of children of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
>
> The content of Glenda's personal knowledge of teaching is based on children of minority cultures and on tenets of intercultural education. We can understand this interest from the perspective of her early, romantic fascination with far-off lands, later more personally experienced, both in the sense of how minorities might experience oppression, and, above all, how Glenda felt when placed in the same position. Her experience in becoming a self-determined person out of the foreign and 'oppressive' cultures of Pakistan, the diplomatic service, and the traditional woman's role provides a core experience and image that she brings to her work.
>
> In her work, there is structural continuum from the real to the ideal. Though the gap presents a dilemma, Glenda appears to use this tension to move gradually from the real to the idea. There are three terrains within which she aims to progress. One concerns the primitive dress, diet, and dance approach to multicultural education and the ideal 'vegetable soup' form of intercultural education. Another is her own professional competence which envisions the past as one of inadequacy and incompetence and a future of skills evolving so as to be able to work effectively within an intercultural frame. The third is the broader context of the school, school board, and society. This framework, regardless of the *content* of Glenda's experiential knowledge, is, above all, a process. We see her moving dynamically along a developmental continuum, her knowledge is self-formed out of personal and professional experience, moved along by a strong sense of responsibility and a desire to succeed. As a result, the content of her knowledge, so far, is undergirded by several key factors. Emotionally, Glenda sees herself as able to understand and empathize with her students--not only to accept them as individuals but also to value their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is reflected clearly in her curriculum and pedagogy. Her curriculum is based on themes of importance and interest to her pupils--themes generated and shaped according to the responses of her students. She construes her job as enabling her students to communicate in her English language, through the principles that *their expertise* in communicating in another language can, if they are given the right support, opportunities, and a comfortable environment, be expressed in English.

Her classroom is small, cozy, with a hexagonal table as the center of activity. There is a plethora of resources to support a variety of activities depending on the theme, to enable different sorts of self-expressive communication to occur. Glenda regards the learning of communication skills as developmental and self-correcting. She does not have detailed plans, just a general idea of where each theme might go--until Friday. She doesn't use behavioral objectives, grammar drills, phonics or worksheets.

Glenda claims that her pupils have taught her what her curriculum and pedagogy should be. In that sense, she lives the notion of teacher as learner, not only in her personal but also in her pedagogical life. The relationship in the classroom is thereby horizontal; everyone participates in deciding where to go and what to do next--important ingredients in reducing alienation and increasing self-determination. Glenda hastens to add, however, that this hasn't been easy. She still has difficulty leaving behind 'the teacher as dispenser of wisdom and knowledge' to trust in her students.

Her father, together with the romantic fascination with other lands, were important influences on Glenda's interest in multiculturalism. Ted Aoki, as her teacher and mentor, was an important catalyst in moving Glenda from an other-directed framework of multiculturalism to a personal, authentic view of minority persons and herself. These incidents and persons, though significant, only presage the major source of Glenda's autobiographic praxis--herself. The key, for Glenda, and in her view, for her pupils, is self-directedness. This involved putting significant others in a facilitative relationship to self as opposed to a source of self. The major sources, of Glenda's knowledge are thus rooted in personal experiences that gave rise to her self-directedness. These occurred at the nadir, during her perceived anomie in life. Following the 'stagnant period' of being a suburban wife, having children, teaching what she didn't want to teach (home economics), she was alienated further by being immersed in a foreign culture of Pakistan, and the artificial diplomatic life. Conflicting sets of rules, none of them hers, governed her life, leaving her feeling powerless and unauthentic. She vividly recalls a turning point: an hysterical tantrum when, in Pakistan, she could not be issued a hall table lamp because of her husband's 'junior' status in the diplomatic corps. The hall table lamp became a symbol which encapsulated the depths of other-directedness and, at the same time, the decision to liberate herself and to begin to understand other people (minorities) in their own terms. Her personal development intertwined with that of others through her explorations of the people and culture of Pakistan, as well as through her explorations, while teaching English at an International School, of the roles of women in different cultures. She returned the texts of others in a literal and metaphorical sense to the storeroom and proceeded, with her students, to create texts of her own and their own.

The foregoing discussion of the nature and sources of Glenda's teacher's knowledge has also illustrated, in a general sense, its evolution. The watershed experiences which enabled Glenda to become self-initiated and self-determined constitute a 'revolution' in her disposition and activities. This provided the energy, over an exhausting but satisfying four-year period, for the development of a curriculum and pedagogy in intercultural education. She acknowledged her inadequacy, lack of competence and overtheorizing, and undertook a process of practical self-education and professional development in three terrains of her professional life. She did this through observation of other teachers, questioning, experience, reflection on experience, and the careful selection of courses, workshops, and conferences that met *her* needs--providing herself with a coherent curriculum for professional development (Butt & Raymond, 1989).

At the core of Ray's preferred way of teaching is the image of haven. The concern for content rather than individual student needs troubles him. He would rather create a classroom climate which attends to students' personal needs first; then they would be better able to attend to the academic interests of the curriculum, especially if it is taught through a pupil-centred and experiential approach to teaching.

Ray illustrates his notion of haven through the story of a young boy who was not doing well in school. Upon investigation he discovered that his father was an alcoholic and frequently violent. His experience with these and many other similar situations led him to the conclusions that for many children academic achievement was not a high priority and that school was viewed by some children as an escape from the horrors of their world. He decided that his classroom would be viewed as a haven and that the students would be sympathetically and caringly heard.

Ray reveals the deep personal link between his image of haven when writing about his past. His father was an alcoholic and was intermittently present until he left when Ray was six. He mother struggled to raise him and his brother while teaching elementary school. They frequently moved from town to town. When his mother taught him she was very strict. His elder brother was also hard on him. His experience of junior and senior high school was characterized again as much by humiliation and embarrassment. Through these experiences, he developed a strong sense of compassion for others. His personal experience of home and school enables him to identify with his students in terms of their need for security and a haven.

Early in his career, he was able to express his image of haven within the contexts of being a student counsellor, teaching physical education, extra-curricular activities, and teaching social studies in an era of little centralized prescription of curricula and no external exams. Following a sabbatical year, however, he was assigned to teach mostly compulsory social studies subjects within recentralized and prescribed curricula some grades of which were externally examined.

> Ray teaches a compulsory social studies course to two Grade 9 classes. Students range from regular to very low ability with grade level reading equivalents ranging from 3 to 12. He teaches two Grade 9 optional subjects; one in geography and the other in Canadian history. He is familiar with many of the students in these classes since they are drawn from his compulsory classes. All the Grade 9 classes, both compulsory and optional, are characterized by a wide diversity of pupil ability and pupil dispositions.
>
> It is possible, from Ray's description of his classes, to identify some common factors which, to varying degrees, shape his and many other teachers' curriculum and pedagogy. Whether there is mandated curriculum or not is a powerful influence on the classroom's curriculum-in-use and related pedagogy. The specific nature of the subject matter, whether prescribed or teacher determined, also influences pedagogy. With regard to factors related to students, major influences include ability level, diversity of ability levels, degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and self-control of students. As well, the unique nature of junior high school students, in terms of their early adolescent dispositions, is an important factor. Consideration of students' interests and lived-realities also contributes to a determination of what might be relevant, while the degree of student choice with respect to course selection also interrelates with these factors.
>
> The above influences are mediated, of course, by the teacher *as person*. The teacher is the final arbitrator in determining what finally emerges from these multiple influences in various situations and with various actors. Ray's ideal image of haven, its translation into elaborating curriculum to take account of student lives and personal

development as a necessary precondition for academic development, and its manifestation into humanistic classroom climate, activities and management strategies is of vital personal importance. The key issue here becomes the degree to which the curriculum is adequate, in and of itself, and the degree to which prescription, external testing, and specific subject matter is perceived to allow for flexible adaptation, in terms of both content and pedagogy, to meet students' needs and interests as well as Ray's style and beliefs.

These *common* factors interact to produce *different* pedagogical and curriculum outcomes in Ray's classes. Ray's Grade 9 compulsory social studies exhibit typical, ebullient junior high school behavior. They are from regular to very low ability levels and very diverse in other respects as well. They did not choose to be in this course and are perceived by Ray to be largely unmotivated. They appear to be unable to work co-operatively in groups larger than two. The class includes several disinterested students who disrupt the class.

When Ray's ideal image and preferred teaching style, together with his need for motivation, control, and orderly discipline are brought to bear on this cluster of characteristics, his pedagogical resolution clearly favors control and a concern for coverage of curriculum content which will be tested. Ray's pedagogy, then for this class, is basically traditional direct teaching, including lecturing, note-taking, individual exercises, reading, and answering questions from the text. Within his framework Ray is only able to pursue his ideal image of the classroom in limited ways. For example, through occasional personal contacts during seatwork periods, he is able to engage in problem resolution, and discuss home and family concerns that might affect students' work. In addition, he also tries to make curriculum and pedagogy relevant to real life problems and pupil interests, whenever possible.

Ray's sacrifice of his preferred image and teaching style to content and control in his compulsory Grade 9 classes contrasts significantly with his Grade 9 geography option. Ray developed this course himself and has received the approval necessary to teach it. The students in this class have many of the same characteristics as those in the Grade 9 compulsory courses except that a significant number of them may have freely chosen to take it and only a few students are in the class because other preferred options have been filled. Ray's pedagogy in this class is distinctly different from the compulsory course in social studies.

> *The options I teach are open and I develop the curriculum completely based on my perception of how the students can most readily learn those things I think they should know from the course. This freedom to develop allows me to do things in more unorthodox ways. Students build tests, they develop information sheets, they teach classes, they make and play games, and they build and demonstrate models. They participate more directly in the curriculum building process. (D.B., p. 8)*

Despite the nature of the subject matter, which requires the acquisition of some skills through repetition, frequent review sheets, and quizzes, the main flavour of the classroom emphasizes exciting and enjoyable student-centered activities. Students develop models and games and work together on projects which they teach to the class. Other students create their own maps and charts in the Geography option class. Ray is able to create a curriculum which matches his preferred experiential and personal pedagogical style (Butt, Townsend & Raymond, 1990).

<u>An Incomplete Comparative Analysis of Lloyd, Glenda and Ray's Stories</u>

Both Glenda and Lloyd work in situations that are demanding. They both relate how their jobs are stressful in common and different ways. First, despite the stress of teaching in the classroom, they both see the major sources of stress as emanating from *outside* the classroom, or from sources over which they have *less control*. Lloyd cites interruptions, being in a fishbowl, and external testing as problems, whereas Glenda cites the educational system, political, and societal attitudes towards minorities. Both Glenda and Lloyd identify tensions in collegial relations, both with peers and administrators,

but their responses are different perhaps because of dispositions and situation factors. Lloyd withdraws and becomes a 'closet teacher'; Glenda continues to work in a collegial way. Glenda's job *requires* her to collaborate; Lloyd's grade-level meetings did provides some opportunity to collaborate--which was thwarted. Lloyd's disposition, however, the three S's, upward mobility, and acceptance, would more likely lead to withdrawal.

The nature of Lloyd's and Glenda's knowledge, though similar in some respects, are different as to means, which illuminates the uniqueness produced by interactions of person, task, situation, and context. Lloyd's three S's and upward mobility contrast with Glenda's self-determination and real-ideal continua. There is, however, one strong common factor between Lloyd and Glenda. Both can personally *identify with the situations of their students.* This provides a bridge and bond between teacher and students, a mutualism that can maximize congruence of teacher and pupil intentions (Butt, 1978) and, thereby, learning.

Not all teachers, however, are fortunate enough to work in a context that permits a high degree of congruence between preferred images of teaching and pupil needs. Ray (Butt, Raymond & Ray, 1988) has an image of his preferred classroom as a haven, where children's needs and interests are addressed first, so that they can face the academic concerns of the mandated curriculum. He was able to project this image while teaching physical education, doing student counselling, and developing an individualized curriculum in social studies when free from the mandated curriculum and external testing. Later, however, his work assignment changed to include only social studies, history, and geography at the junior high school level. Then, a recentralization of curriculum and the return of external testing forced him to abandon his individualized curriculum, and to cover the mandated curriculum using traditional pedagogy, so as to be prepared for external tests. This pedagogy, alien to him, was also alien to the pupils, who no presented many more discipline problems. Ray's image of haven and his preferred pupil-centered pedagogy are not problematic, except in two contexts--an optional class in geography which allows him to use his own curriculum and, paradoxically, a compulsory geography course, which is pursued with interest by *high-ability* students. These interactions highlight the importance of person-context matches and mismatches in teaching, as well as the potential effect on teachers' creativity of prescribed curricula and external testing.

Influences of Glenda's, Lloyd's and Ray's teachers' knowledge include their experiences as children, parents, teachers, cultural backgrounds, personal and professional experiences, and peers. This spectrum of possible influences is relatively common across teachers' autobiographies, despite unique patterns and emphases. Some teachers have current or past mentors who remain with them in spirit; some having images which guide their thoughts and actions. Though Glenda's development is more personal and later than Lloyd's early and familial pattern, both cluster around significant life experiences, traumas, and transformations. This attests to the link between life history and professional thought and action (Butt & Raymond, 1989).

From this incomplete comparative analysis included here we can identify several different types of "commonalities" which relate to these three teachers' lives within their distinctly different personal experiences, working contexts, teachers' knowledge and images. Firstly, there appears to be a set of sources and influences which may provide an interpretive framework for examining and understanding teachers' knowledge and development. Secondly, despite vast differences in teaching and context, a common generic process appears to lie at the core of teaching, teacher development, and the teachers' experience of working reality. This process is the relationship between person and context; particularly the degree to which person-context interactions are synergistic (or congruent), dialectic, (that there is a healthy dialogue and tension between person and context), or problematic, (whereby the

teacher experiences severe difficulty in expressing certain aspects of their preferred image of teaching). Thirdly, teachers carry with them significant influences from their personal histories into their teaching. Indeed, teachers' images or central metaphors for teaching appear to originate from their childhoods.

It is this latter potential commonality we wish to examine further in the next section.

Aggregation of Cases as a Method for Exploring Commonality

Although we believe what might be common or similar across teachers' lives can reside in one teacher's story, it does not become that visible until we engage, as we just did, in comparative analysis of a cluster of stories. The commonalities just identified, due to the limited number of cases reveal only potential commonalities. In order to clarify whether or not commonalities hold up, it is necessary to examine multiple cases, and, through a process of aggregation map out their nature and extent. The commonality we wish to investigate here is the relation between teaching dispositions and early childhood personal history. In addition to the three cases explored so far we have developed cases from eight more teachers stories in the same intensive way as before. All of them showed strong relationships between telling childhood experiences and teaching dispositions. In creating cases from stories we wrote case summaries which were somewhat shorter than before but longer than case capsules. We did this in order to economize on writing space while still trying to include a significant personal story line. We include here only two case summaries to both illustrate this style of writing and two personal examples of the relationship between childhood experience and teaching dispositions.

> In her early years Peggy often struggled with the puzzle of her life. She was often "confused," "alone but not lonely," felt a "sense of isolation," and often struggled to become the independent person she wanted to be. Peggy had strong survival skills as she struggled for control and identity. At birth she was adopted by a couple in their forties, "this was often a sore spot with me," they had two sons 6 and 7 years older than Peggy. The older brothers were not interested in playing with her, and she was often left on her own. Because of her father's age they often received the comment, "what a cute little granddaughter you have." She can recall being very upset by this remark and correcting the mistake. Her mother suffered severe emotional problems and would rotate between periods of depression and withdrawn behavior and periods of outgoing acceptance of Peggy. "For as long as I can remember, my mother suffered from a emotional disorder; this left me in a awkward position as a youngster: somewhere being loved beyond all expectations and being rejected for no apparent reason. This conjures up a confusing image on my childhood." They lived in a new development and were the first house in the area, as well as being physically isolated, Peggy felt emotionally isolated; a mother with inconsistent moods, a father who was working a great deal of the time, and brothers several older who "did not want to play with the little twirp." Peggy sums up; the family by saying "On the outside we appeared to be the 'typical' Canadian family . . . but beyond appearance, we were anything but normal . . . no one knew how I grew up. No one really understood." This puzzling fateful confusing youth "had a dramatic impact on my personal and professional life." There is the image created by these early years that set a confusing scene focusing on victimization verses survival. The contrast in the way their

life appeared on the outside and the way it was on the inside. This dual appearance lead to a very different public and private life.

The main theme that treads it's way through Peggy's life is the school has always been regarded as a haven. This haven further indicated the split between Peggy's personal and private life. The haven at school provided Peggy with a predictable environment to sort out her ongoing struggle of self-esteem and "who did I want to be as a person." Because of the struggle early in her life, Peggy now feels she has a credible role to play in assisting other students to experience the security of "the haven of school: and believes she was "born to teach health," because of its process approach to personal learning. She believes this is the most important course in the school and states "if your personal life is not in order, all the rest of the academic just don't matter."

School as a Haven

"Once I entered preschool, I found a new stability that I had never experienced before. I remember the security that I felt while being at school graded K-7." At the kindergarten level, Peggy would get herself up and take the bus to school, seldom would her mother be up to assist. The memories are still vivid as "my kindergarten experience was most enjoyable. I would depart the bus and met Mrs. Smith, the teacher. We followed set routines . . . " "Grades one to three . . . I did well in school, felt good about myself and enjoyed life in general. I cried at the end of every grade, wondering what the summer months would bring." Peggy was motivated by the positive relationships with these teachers. "I admire the ladies who made me feel good on a daily basis." Grade seven was a year of struggling for self-esteem and composure. Again the school environment provided many positive rewards, treasurer of student council, role in school play. "I tried to shut out all the pressure of home by securing my position in school. This security was short lived." There were several factors that lead to her disastrous experience in junior high school. Her two older brothers did not do well in school and she became tired of being, "the rose between two thorns." They struggled with the notion that I was successful in school and received "Mom's and Dad's praise while they did not."

During the adolescent years "School was still a haven, but it had a different meaning for me. My need for peer acceptance was number one concern in life. School was still the place to get acceptance and I was willing to get it at any cost." These years are colored by the confusion, low self-esteem, less than ideal friends, and involvement with drugs and alcohol.

Peggy developed a new sense of the person she wanted to be in high school. She was able to exercise her independence and regain her self-esteem. School again had been a haven for personal fulfillment. She became the Queen of the school and was very popular. Along with the increase in self-esteem she also had an increase in academic success.

The pattern was set and when Peggy met with shaky self-concept and uncertainty about herself following marriage, birth of two children and death of her father, she again returned to school. "Our second son added to the confusion but instead of letting it get the best of me, I took action and returned to University. The result was that I finished by B.Ed. with drive and desire that was never present before. As my worth as a person was confirmed, my self-confidence soared, as did my grades. The split between Peggy's public and personal life was reinforced. This again reinforced that when things got confusing in her personal life she could find success in school as this was a public environment that she was well aware of how to control and have her needs met.

"Teaching seemed like a logical career choice for me. My classroom too has become a haven in much the same way school was previously a haven for me. When my role as a counsellor becomes overwhelming, I retreat to the security of my classroom.

School has consistently provided Peggy with a safe haven. She believes the school and herself as a teacher should try to create this safe environment for students. "I recognize that for many students the school and perhaps my classroom in particular is a haven for them. I always try to arrive at the school early and leave late . . . and others come in for a quick self-esteem check." In her classroom, Peggy promotes "groups of students that I have developed a degree of closeness" and "I also love the challenge of getting the class to a stage of cohesiveness where they all feel comfortable, willing to

share and open up." "I enjoy the satisfaction I feel when helping adolescence deal with this particularly difficulty stage of their life." Peggy teaches in a junior high school which in her own life is the one time in her school life that her own life became confusing, grades fell and self-esteem dropped. Teaching at junior high, "It is the school's responsibility to assist young people to see themselves and others as unique and important individuals." Peggy finds it a "challenge for students to develop and use their decision making skills in order to make the best possible choice for themselves in their current situations." This idea reinforces how Peggy was able to shed the victim role and survive the unpredictable early years to become independent.

Teaching health is a natural extension of Peggy's desire to help students with their personal development. Peggy describes, "The methods in my madness ties closely to my desire for involvement in human relations and dealing with the feelings (ahead of my desire to deal with content). I have maintained for some time that the amount of factual knowledge you possess does not matter two hoots, if your personal life is a disaster then what is the use of being a warehouse of knowledge. My students are taught to love themselves and then make room for others. Then and only then will their headspace be suited to meaningful learning." When teaching Peggy feels the classroom must, "create a safe, open, non-judgmental environment in which students feel comfortable."

As a child Peggy received positive support from some adults. Her father frequently took her too work and she became comfortable having coffee with the people to the point where, "it became difficult to talk with her immature friends." Teachers also provided her with adults to admire. These positive experiences have provided Peggy with the belief that teacher can have a significant impact on her students, and feels the health curriculum helps people deal with "liking themselves as a person." "To me math, science, social studies, and language arts will have little or no meaning in the life of a young person who doesn't yet feel comfortable with who they are. Thus it is my desire to teach kids to like themselves."

"I was born to teach health." The process orientation of the curriculum is her natural teaching style," I don't usually make a conscious effort to include learning in an experimental mode. It just happens without me planning it." In the process of teaching, "I have students make sense of the material based on their own life situations." To facilitate this the content is covered in a three "I" process: 1.) Introduction of content, 2.) Interaction to make sense of the topic, 3.) Internalization to make personal sense reflection and absorption. Peggy's own life reflects that students must have their emotional needs met to do well academically. Peggy utilizes a variety of teaching methods, role playing, observations, interviews, student presentations, and she also uses her own personal stories.

"Perhaps my greatest source of pleasure in teaching comes when I am able to include some personal examples from my own life to help students grasp a topic. I have become accustomed to walking a fine line in deciding how much to disclose." Her early life has provided the framework for her success as a health teacher "Professionally my life at _____ has made me empathetic to students. I realize that our "ideal" home was less adequate in providing security and support to me as a child. I guess that there must be many students coming to my class in worse shape than I was emotionally. Perhaps I can sum up the impact of _____ on my professional life by saying, "I've been there."

• • •

Kent is a 39 year-old teacher who was born and raised for the most part in Calgary. He lived an isolated childhood in that his father was rarely home and his mother was preoccupied with the many younger children in the family. Kent spent much of his time and energy in competitive sports, excelling in several, and basing his educational decisions on sports rather than his occupational future. He taught P.E. and coached athletic teams in two high schools in rural communities, having entirely different experiences as a result of the attitude and support of the administrators.

Kent's pedagogy seems to be characterized by three major themes: Organization/Control, Commitment to P.d., and Love for Students.

Kent prides himself on his organizational abilities that render him "the most competent person on staff" in his area. Not only does he follow the curriculum "exactly,"

with only one exception, but his lessons and units are well done. He is not afraid of "flash visits at any time from anyone." He stresses managing and maximizing time, maximum productivity, and preparation. At the beginning of the year, he sets the class up so "it practically runs itself." However, his position of control is unequivocal--"I am the boss." He sets the tone for the semester, making absolutely clear statements regarding his limits and expectations in the class. He never makes a rule or threat that he did not "back up every time in a consistent fashion." He developed, through trial and error, a satisfactory way of dealing with crisis discipline situations. He enjoys the fact that he was "virtually isolated and on his own"--totally responsible for his students' knowledge of P.E.

As his teaching evolved, however, there was cultivated more of an emphasis on the human element--"I always stressed fundamentals with the emphasis on fun." He became less intent on winning and achieving and tried to make things more fun for himself and the students, "but still working to achieve mastery of the sport." Conflicts were experienced when he had to fight for funds for P.Ed. and extra-curricular programs in the school. He developed a close working relationship with an administrator who supported his programs and joked around with him.

Kent's current emphasis on excellence, organization, order and control seem to be a direct result of his early life efforts to obtain control over his life which was fraught with paradoxes. Even the values modelled by his parents were in direct contrast to each other and his father's lifestyle itself was contradictory. His mother brought him up in a strict Mormon household so that he never drank or smoked at all in high school and "never even said 'shit' till he was 16." She spoiled her children and devoted her life to looking after them, although it was quite a blow for young Kent to be ousted from the centre of attention when the second child was born to the family.

Kent's father on the other hand, who "drank and smoked and used rough language," was rarely at home. He made a living for the family by running an illegal gambling house and "making book on the races." His father avoided getting arrested through a clever scheme of setting up someone else to "take the fall" when there was a pre-arranged raid on the club. He made enough money to bring up six kids "in a nice home in a middle-class neighborhood." Kent's father was definitely the boss in the family, making what seemed like unilateral decisions that had far-reaching effects on Kent's young life. "Dad broke my heart by moving to another neighborhood" bringing an abrupt end to a promising baseball career.

Kent not only excelled in athletics, but also loved school. He was "way ahead in reading because he read comic books like crazy." He was the "smartest boy in the class--the only one who understood zero and could do simple multiplication." As long as he understood the teacher's instructions, academics came easily. He developed a love-hate relationship with a teacher, competing for attention, creating a "real contest for control of the class." Later, through athletic prowess, Kent soon discovered that he could impress the pretty girls, with sports giving him a "vehicle for acceptance and a way to be popular."

The second theme noted in Kent's pedagogy was first of two things that "made teaching work" for him--his "total love and commitment for P.E. and sports." The students knew that he believed in, and lived, all the principles of fitness and nutrition, reading every book and journal on the subjects that he could. He tried to set an example of a healthy lifestyle to his students. He not only had a thorough knowledge of the subject matter which made teaching fun, but also had confidence in his ability to teach the content effectively to the students.

Commitment to physical activities started early in life for Kent who spent an inordinate amount of time and energy trying to gain his father's respect and attention, particularly through athletic achievements. He modelled himself after his father who was "a tremendous fighter," winning the Golden Gloves for western Canada three years in a row. Kent himself became an accomplished athlete in several fields, also "boxing golden gloves." Sports gave Kent "an identity." He extended his involvement in athletics to teaching, coaching and lecturing. His determination and overriding sense of autonomy are exemplified by his effort as a young child, when he taught himself to tie his own shoelaces by himself when he was only four years old and to this day ties his laces "different than anyone else." In a wide variety of activities he made an all-out effort to best everyone else in the field--he was a "fierce competitor at marbles"; he was the last one

in the ring when playing dodgeball; he followed a favorite teacher's bus "for about two miles" to see where she lived.

Kent "loved winning" and structured his life around gaining the attention of his father, girls, and people in general, by excelling at sports. His most thrilling life experience resulted from making a "great hit" at an important point in the final baseball game of the league championship--"I have never felt so fantastic in my life as I did that night." In his basketball achievements, Kent "became a scoring machine." However, much of Kent's effort was directed at impressing others--his parents, a favorite teacher, a special girl--although the pleasure seemed to focus on the process rather than the end result, which either never seemed to come, or was an outcome that was never dealt with. Influenced by his wife, he quit drinking, partying, and playing basketball at college and undertook his university career.

The third theme, Love for Students, which Kent himself names as the second of two "driving forces" that underlie all his teaching--the first being his love of sports. His concern for students is not just confined to their school experience, but he states that he "really wants each student to learn and grow and do well in their lives." He feels that teaching "becomes easy" when students can sense this attitude in teachers. Students come to respect you as a teacher, resulting in discipline and other problems becoming non-existent or negligible--"teaching becomes a joy."

In order to achieve this ideal environment for teaching and learning, Kent attempts to "create an environment where everyone can participate, have fun but also grow and improve to their maximum level. He stresses the ideal of the well-rounded individual who was "strong emotionally and intellectually as well as physically," promoting "physical education as a lifetime pursuit." He has a keen awareness for the differences in skill level among students, however, and finds evaluation of students in P.E. to be "a source of stress or conflict," wishing that P.Ed. was a "pass/fail situation."

In the classroom, Kent likes to teach only positive things. He hates bullies and will not tolerate violence or bullying in his class. He also does not allow ridicule of students because of inadequacies. An atmosphere of support is achieved through determining the correct pronunciation of students' names on the first day; being lenient in his attitude for students without prior experience in particular skills; not enforcing the dress code strictly for the first few classes until needy students can obtain proper gym attire.

Kent develops friendships with many of his students whom he comes to genuinely respect and enjoy as people outside of class, appreciating the fact that their paths may again corss in their later lives and their relationship may be reversed--"someone I taught may one day be my boss." He maintains a proper student-teacher relationship at school but develops an older-friend-type relationship outside of class, being careful not to mix up these ways of interacting. His friendly attitude extended also to faculty, administrators, and people who might "wander in off the street." He would provide P.E.-related services for members of the community--"cowboys and Mounties came in to get taped for rodeos and hockey games."

Kent's excessive need to win at all costs seemed to have mellowed as result of learning that he could not always win. He felt a great deal of confidence that he could excel at anything toward which he turned his attention until he was beaten by two boys in a foot race. He then experienced a "'great revelation"--no matter how hard he tried, someone might simply be better than him.

Kent models himself after coaches he has had and tries to return to his students the love he himself was shown. He states that he teaches and coaches because he is "trying to be Mr. W."--a coach who was the "first man who ever treated me with dignity and respect." Kent spent all his energies as a youth trying to impress his dad--"I'll never forget the look on my dad's face and how proud he was of me . . . I wanted to keep that look in his eyes." He states that his father loved him the most of the six children although he never felt his father's love in a personal way. "He always expected so much of me but he never hugged me or told me he loved me when I was little or even big." However, in response to the physical and emotional absence of his father, Kent turned to teachers and coaches for emotional gratification.

> Kent seems to make great efforts to make competition fair in his P.E. classes as a result of having experienced unfair situations in his childhood. He cites an experience when the coach picked his son and all his friends, while Kent "never had a chance for a decent try out." Similarly, moving into a new neighborhood with no friends and "scared all the time," he had to contend with gangs of boys who "were tough and not kind to little grade six boys."
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> Recently, while working at a "good job" with a "tremendous principal" and a personal life replete with wife, children, two cars, and dog, he still had a sense of incompleteness--"Is this all there is to life"? One wonders whether Kent, so steeped in athletic competition, will ever feel that sense of achievement. You might win the game or the championship or the league, but there is always another team next time that needs to be beaten. (Yamagishi, 1991).

Beyond Aggregation? Theme Anthologies and Personal Exemplars

To this point we have tried to show how we have been able to discern and represent, in various ways, commonality in teachers knowledge and development while maintaining contact with the uniquely personal ways in which these commonalities might be manifested. We have moved carefully from the personal story, to the single case study, to a comparative analysis of a small cluster of stories, to an aggregation of eleven case studies which includes my own story (Butt, 1990).

Our next question was how do we go beyond aggregation of single case studies into larger groups of stories? Several pragmatic concerns here caused us to ponder: the development of single case studies is very slow and representing all of these cases is impossible. We wondered, if following interpretation of a cluster of cases we could not use some other means of interpreting and representing teachers' stories. That is what we turn to next.

Here we will leave the relationship between teaching and early personal history and turn to another type of commonality. A part of our teachers' stories which have not been included in our case study summaries, so far, relates to the nature and quality of the teachers' worklife. Early in our work it became very clear that teachers' intercollegial relations was a major theme across many if not most teachers' stories. This theme was clearly related to both job satisfaction and teacher development. How could we portray this commonality in a way that did justice its complexity, profound effect and its integral link with teachers' personal professional experiences?

Encouraged by evidence from a number of early case studies, we wished to interpret many more to explore and represent the nature of intercollegial relations. From perusing our stories it was clear that the four logical possibilities for intercollegial relations included "positive" and "negative" relationships with both peers and superordinates. We examined forty teachers' stories in order to determine the extent and nature of the phenomenon of intercollegial relations (Butt, Paul & Smith, 1988). We identified and extracted relevant parts of teachers' stories which fell into the four categories above. Within each category we tried to investigate

the different types of relationships which teachers experienced. We portrayed these through a series of quotes from teachers' stories which Bopp (1983) has called theme anthologies.

These theme anthologies characterized, quite well, the four categories and various subcategories of experience. Since direct quotes were used, they brought in a sense of the personal. There still was, however, a sense of violation of the integrity of each teacher's story, each quotation being torn by its roots from the whole story. With the thought of abandoning all of this work hanging over us, we looked at the positive side of this manner of interpretation. We could identify the scope, nature, and character of collegiality. Understanding these relationships from the perspective of the teachers, so to speak, might help significantly with the facilitation of staff development. Our data and portrayal did satisfy the criteria of more traditional qualitative research--typicality and representativeness--in terms of the four categories of relationship and elementary, secondary, male and female teachers. How could we represent the whole person's story? In our writing of the paper (which at this point remains unsubmitted for publication!) we are organizing it as follows. Following the introduction we include a case study summary of just the worklife portion of one story which contained a mixture of the four categories of relationship. We then included theme anthologies of the four types of relationship. We ended with four case study summaries of four teachers' stories as exemplars of each of the four categories of relationship. Through this means we hope we will be able to retain some semblance of the personal story while usefully representing commonality.

Discerning Qualitative Commonality Through Quantitative Encoding and Analysis

The commonalities represented so far in the paper have been relatively easy to see and are experienced by a large number of teachers. There are other relationships and phenomena that apply to smaller groups of teachers which are harder to "see" and, from over one hundred stories, find, and bring together. These less common phenomena help us see what "might be" a possibility for others and are, therefore, though not universal, important to reveal. For example, we have noted that one preferred context for a small group of teachers, where they are most satisfied and where they have grown most as professionals is in the spaces where the normal pressure and scrutiny of the school system is "absent." In these spaces where "it doesn't matter" these teachers flourish--whether within extra-curricular activity, outdoor education, school trips to Europe, E.S.L. or other such experiences. Another small group of teachers have genuine mentors who have significantly helped their careers.

In order to be able to quickly identify and "call a meeting" of groups of teachers, such as, these we have evolved an interpretive framework for encoding teachers' stories. Within the three major categories of personal history, professional history and teachers' previous teachers, we have developed a grid of potential sources and influences on teachers' knowledge

and development which includes over forty items. With each story we are able to code the number of instances, of a paragraph or larger, of a particular source or influence, where it is located, and whether it is experienced as positive or negative. To date we have encoded over sixty teachers' stories using this framework and we are beginning to use this data set as a way of organizing our qualitative data and its interpretation. In order to maintain the integrity of the personal and collective, however, with each investigation using this grid we will still use a selection of case study, cluster analysis, aggregation theme anthologies and exemplars in order to keep our commonalities alive with the personal.

In this endeavour, as well, we are trying to explore how we can responsibly use quantitative means as an aid to qualitative understanding.

For example from our encoded data we were interested in exploring what percentage of teachers' stories included instances of parents, family in general, relatives, childhood, adolescence, and young adult experiences as being a source and influence on teachers' knowledge and development. The results are displayed in Table 1.

**Table One: Percentage of Teachers Reporting Particular Sources and Influences on Teaching Dispositions**

| Source or Influence | Positive/Negative | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Mother | + | 82 |
| Mother | - | 52 |
| Father | + | 86 |
| Father | - | 76 |
| Family | + | 84 |
| Family | - | 62 |
| Relatives | + | 74 |
| Relatives | - | 52 |
| Childhood | + | 72 |
| Childhood | - | 40 |
| Adolescence | + | 52 |
| Adolescence | - | 48 |
| Young Adulthood | + | 30 |
| Young Adulthood | - | 18 |

What we think is important here is that these simple quantitative statistics confirm our qualitative interpretation that childhood is a major source and influence on teaching dispositions relative to the trend towards lower influences of later stages of life. When we look at what these influences are, it is likely that they are familial. These figures are powerful in that they confirm the qualitative analysis regarding the extent and nature of the personal on teaching. But on their own without the qualitative inquiry we would be blind as to the nature of these commonalities, the processes that underlie them, and how they might be manifest in a

wide variety of persons' lives and contexts. It is imperative then to report the personal and contextual details of teachers' stories when using descriptive quantitative data.

## The Role of the Personal and Contextual Within Qualitative Validity and Commonality

Physical science phenomena which can be controlled within a laboratory setting provide a researcher with ample opportunity to examine and discern simple relationships among a few variables. When the scientist moves, however, from simple physical phenomena or inorganic molecules to organic compounds or natural substances such as coal or oil, then onto natural systems and the environment itself, much of the premises of simplistic views of science disappear. Complexity and variability make it very difficult to conduct traditional "experiments," control variables, and predict outcomes, especially when experimental intrusions, in themselves, change the processes under study to the extent that the inquiry might be compromised. Traditional views of scientific notions of validity, generalization, control, prediction and replicability and the idea of universal laws, then, even within science are open to challenge. To think of applying these notions, as is, to phenomenon such as social or human activity is inappropriate. What, then, are the conditions for validly representing educational phenomena and regularities within them?

We have tried to illustrate, though an inductive examination of our practices how one can portray commonality in teacher life stories, teacher knowledge, and development, while maintaining contact with the personal. At this point, however, it is necessary to draw out, in a deductive manner, a series of arguments as to why it is necessary. These arguments are drawn from our experience and from a recent review of the literature. They relate to three issues--the complexity of personal and contextual phenomena in education, qualitative generalization, and validity.

### Personal and Contextual Complexity

If moving from the world of physical science to the world of nature represents an increase of complexity of several orders, then moving into the human and social worlds represents an increase of many multiple orders of complexity. Within the social world, there is a multiplicity of potential variables, all in dynamic transition and transformation. The rate and variety of interactions and transactions is usually extremely high, and fluid. When one adds not one human intentionality and will to this mix, but many, plus the negotiated and unnegotiated interrelationships that occur, what results is unpredictable and irreplicable in the sense of science. What results cannot necessarily be simply traced to one cause or one

person, necessarily. What we have instead is a complex web of multiple threads of intended and unintended events of intersocial construction (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 177).

Fortunately, in fields of deliberate and intentional human thought and action such as the social professions there is sufficient reduction in random and varied action to make it possible to study. The character, however, of what we can see as regularities differs significantly in kind and degree from physical science. Variability in context, situation, moment, mood, and multiple idiosyncrasies can still upturn what an observer thinks might occur, or even an intending participant! One thing we can do, however, is look at what dispositions particular individuals bring to a context or situation and try to understand how they got to be that way. In the case of our teacher stories, we can look at the knowledge they hold--its structure or architecture of principles, images, metaphor, habits, routines and other such frames or dispositions to act. We can look at the way they have or have not been able to express these predispositions in action in various contexts and begin to get some sense of possible manifestations of person-context interactions. Whereas the disposition and processes a person brings might have regularities, manifestations in different contexts might vary tremendously. In representing regularity and commonality within one individual, then, we necessarily must portray the rich grain and detail of the person and of a variety of contexts in order to demonstrate and communicate commonality. This same argument applies with respect to commonality across persons and contexts. We also need to portray how the inquirer (whether autobiographer or co-researcher) came to interpret and understand it the way they do. These practices, in our uncertain area, leave the process open for the reader to become a co-researcher: to formulate their own conclusions.

Qualitative Generalization

The first point we wish to make here is that we might find regularity or commonality within one teacher's story or across teachers' stories and in each case there is the tension between regularities in disposition and how these might be similarly or differentially shaped by common or varied contexts.

Within the complexity of human and social phenomena just discussed, even within one life, the nature of generality, other than habit, is not likely to be of the simple or surface kind, that clearly and universally applies with a degree of certainty. We probably are safer to talk of a loosely related series of dispositions to think and act in certain ways within rough categories of situations and contexts. It seems more like a matrix of possibilities. In order to understand how a fundamental process or pattern might work we need to study as much the contingencies of context and situation--contextual commonality and difference--as we do the regularity in question.

Classroom reality is riddled with paradoxes and dilemmas. As we can see from our stories, particularly Ray's, it sometimes is like working on a knife's edge in terms of pedagogical action. One context brings a student-centred style another a traditional approach. Within these circumstances it is important to bring as many of the contextual contingencies, personal feelings and intentions, as possible, to our inquiries so that we and the reader might have a better chance of understanding. In this sense it is imperative to study, record, and bring in the personal and contextual. In being able to compare from one teachers' story to others, the same arguments hold, in order that we might ascertain similarity and difference in contextual and personal conditions. We also need to know the tensions of the moment or stream of moments, the complete picture in detail since particular aspects of apparent detail might be, in a particular case, the trigger for transformation. We need these details in order "to enter their worlds" . . . "to situate the experience of education among the relations within which it has come to form." (Grumet, 1990, p. 108).

Donmoyer's (1990) discussion of individual experience as expressed within one person's story related to the formation of a teachers' craft is pertinent here. The essential structure(s) (Husserl in Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 203) of a teacher's craft knowledge whether habit, routine, principle, image, metaphor or other such element is a series of generalities based on repeated experiences, adapted and modified along the way into a way of being. These generalities don't work as a determining rule but as a starting point from which one might adapt for specific action. "A generality can suggest possibilities but never dictate action" (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 182). He learned from experience and constructed his own knowledge in different contexts. "Despite the difference, however, each year teaching became easier; each year I could more easily anticipate the consequences of my actions; increasingly, I could even control events. Generalization, of one sort or another, occurred" (p. 187). Inevitably, then, to understand the regularities and generalities within one teacher's knowledge, it is essential to have access to the grain and detail of the person and the contexts with which they interacted to construct meaning.

When we move to a consideration of commonality across teachers' stories there are several notions we need to consider. Transferability (Lincoln & Tuba, 1985) refers to the degree to which one particular process or, phenomenon, or relation evident within one case might apply to another or others. Inherent in this process of generalization is relationship between the two contexts. That is, in order to ascertain the nature of transferability we need, particularly in our work, as many details of person and context as possible. Goetz and LeComptes (1984) notions of comparability and translatability, which refers to similarity of theory and method across cases, and Stakes naturalistic generalizations all require detail of context and, in the case of teachers' stories, detail of person. In a phenomenological sense we

see the need, then for thick description (see Ward Schofield, 1990). As we aggregate cases of a variety of contexts, we can begin to see clusters or categories of contexts which enable us in a sociological sense to select stories which are typical of a particular context and make sure that a group of stories is representative of the range of contexts which might be encountered. We also need to represent the ordinary as well as the extraordinary.

Types of Commonality Across Teachers' Experience

Borrowing from Dilthey (in Polkinghorne, 1983), within and across our teachers' stories, we are searching for "categories of life" in a substantive sense--"the processes by means of which experience appears as related and meaningful" (p. 27) and the "essential structures" (Husserl in Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 203) of life as teachers. Can we discern from our teachers' stories of experience the essential structure of particular commonalities. For example one common feeling which teachers experience in their worklives is anger. In a study of what it is to experience anger Stevik (in Polkinghorne, 1990, p. 212) listed the many personal meanings or experiences of anger of thirty women and tried to distill the essence of the substance and process of anger. She distilled that anger "is the pre-reflective experience of being made unable by another who prevents us . . . an interpersonal situation in which an important other prevents one's being" (p. 213). The goal is to produce a description of the structure of experience which leads to a general understanding of intersubjective experience. We need, however, a wide range of typical and representative examples of personal experience of teachers anger for several reasons: to see how the generality was reached, to ascertain its validity, to compare with others' situations, and to look at ameliorative action in a specific and general sense.

Image is a substantive structure in some teacher's stories which gives meaning within individual stories such as family, home, haven, and team. Concepts or themes such as responsibility or self-determination are other examples. Underlying these substantive elements, however, are personal life processes which are brought to bear on the classroom and children. Across teachers' lives these images are different, unique and idiosyncratic. But what they appear, from our investigations, to have in common is their common source of early childhood. We will need to inquire further, however, into commonalities within the processes of relationship and development between early childhood and teachers' knowledge and development.

Another example of one such process that might be common is the interaction between person and context, and its quality in terms of what is congruent, dialectic, and problematic, and the degree to which each holds sway. Other processes which might be pursued include how do teachers move to adapt to a context or change a context to meet personally preferred images of teaching.

The variety of contexts within and across individuals does not permit exact replication but perhaps of variegated replication (Heron, 1988, p. 58), whereby the essential structure and process manifests itself in varied and unique ways in different contexts for the same and different persons. In this sense, as within Ray and across to other teachers' stories, we are doing a cross-sectional study of the variegated replication of a particular life structure. Initially, however, we work inductively (backwards?) from the particularities of variegated replications to the commonality. This underscores again the importance of the thick description of the personal and contextual to discovering and representing the commonality.

I will conclude this section with discussion of the level of generalization or commonality which appears out of this type of inquiry. This type and level of generalization leaves ample rooms for individuality, the personal and application to varied and new contexts.

In a qualitative study of teacher commitment to various curriculum areas (Butt, et. al 1982) it became clear that there were no common commitment patterns among elementary school teachers. Teachers were quite unique and personal in their patterns of commitment to various subject areas with the exception of a common commitment to basic communication skills. Regardless of the differences in commitment patterns, however, when teachers were asked about the determinants of their *different* subject matter commitments, a *common* pattern of influences was discovered. This pattern consisted of mostly classroom influences including personal interest and enjoyment in the curriculum area; personal expertise and perceived competence in the area; pupil needs and the relevance of the curriculum area to them (as perceived by the teacher), pupil motivation and enjoyment; and resource availability. Only two influences which emanated from outside the classroom were seen as important--legitimized time allocation and those curriculum areas that were *currently* receiving most attention from stakeholder groups. Each influence, then, in this common pattern could take many different values, allowing for both the uniqueness of each situation and the teacher, to produce many different personal patterns of commitment to curriculum areas. This illustrates a higher level form of "generalization" more subtle perhaps for the complexities of human science. This type of generalization focuses on process rather than substance and is generative in nature.

Becker (1990, pp. 239-240) further illucidates the issue of variability of generalization through a very similar example. He uses the example of the cultures of men's and women's prisons. In men's prisons researchers discovered an elaborate culture of convict government which took over many of the functions of keeping order. In women's prisons, however, there was little or no convict government, in fact, a totally different inmate culture emerged. The commonality, however, was that inmates developed a culture that was directed towards countering their perceived deprivations from outside life to inside prison.

Commonalities like the two foregoing examples, person-context interactions, and whatever essential structures underlie the connections between early childhood and teaching dispositions all relate to common processes which link tacit or explicit thought to actions regardless of their variable substantive elements in unique individual manifestations. In this sense these commonalities are generic processes which perhaps, rather than generalizations, are better called generativities.

In order to fully understand these essential processes, and their varied existences, however, we need to have more thick descriptions of the personal and contextual. Furthermore, we need these narratives in order to see the process of how the common manifests itself within the particular so we can be more thoughtful of how the commonality might represent itself or be practiced in new situations.

Validity

Qualitative validity in simple terms is the congruence of our research claims to reality. In the case of the human sciences it is the congruence of our text of understanding with the lived reality of persons (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, pp. 97-98). The question of validity, then, is how well do we represent the perceptions, feelings, thinking, experience of persons, the breadth, depth, and interrelationships of issues, concerns and themes. As Jackson (1990) says, "Do we tell it like it is"? or more specifically in our terms, "Do we tell it like our co-researchers experience it"?

Heron's (1988, pp. 40-46 ) more formal view of validity in human inquiry is that it is the coherence of researched knowledge (propositional knowledge or commonalities) to the experiential knowledge (construed knowledge of co-researchers, in our case teachers' stories) and its coherence to the practical knowledge of how one acts in specific situations and contexts (presented knowledge). In our accounts, then, it is imperative that we demonstrate the links between our claims of commonality and a rich description of the experienced reality base, particularly its personal and contextual elements. For the reader to be a co-researcher with us we also need details of methodology so they can make their own judgments regarding our claims.

Within traditional biographical inquiry, which was practiced with individuals and groups who were deceased, researchers went to extraordinary length to ensure that their work was valid. But there are multiple difficulties in proving validity when one's subject is deceased, when events are past, and when key contexts have disappeared. With our research into teachers' stories it is possible, however, to overcome all of these problems by including the personal and contextual, by studying multiple cases for one sense of triangulation, and most importantly by checking with the autobiographer and involving them collaboratively as co-researchers. We can also actually visit classrooms (and we have) to see how teachers' stories

are expressed in actions. We can see how dependable (and transferrable) a commonality is through examining variegated replication across different contexts.

## Conclusion

What we have tried to illustrate in this paper is a way to portray the unique varieties of professional knowledge that teachers hold and attempt to express in their various contexts. Teachers, who, at a glance from a distance, appear to be perhaps relatively homogeneous and ordinary become extraordinarily unique. Given that, however, we are able to identify commonalities beyond the contextual similarities of the everyday work of teaching, which may begin to give us a sense of collective forms of teachers' knowledge.

We have demonstrated, in a number of ways, the necessity of maintaining a thick description of the personal and contextual when portraying the commonalities which appear to permeate the collective sense of teachers' knowledge and development. But it is very evident, at the same time, that besides providing for the necessary synergy of the personal and collective, that including thick description also unites several other paradoxes which have plagued research, which makes this practice all the more powerful. These include, the ideal and real, the abstract and concrete, theory and practice, and, if we work collaboratively with teachers as co-researchers, the knower and the known. It also brings the personal, practical, and professional together through the common cultural language of the story. In this way the story can breathe life into research.

At the beginning of Peter Reason's edited book Human Inquiry in Action he opens with the quotation, "If you have not lived through something, it is not true" (Kabir). Having not lived through something, as a researcher, the closest we can come to understanding is through experiencing all the detail of person, setting and situation through the story.

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